

**SUMMARY OF THE  
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
OCTOBER 10, 2002**

The Board of Directors of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on October 10, 2002, at 1:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). Chairperson Dr. Paul Kimsey of the California Department of Health Services led the meeting. The agenda for this meeting is shown in Attachment A, new action items are shown in Attachment B, incomplete action items from past meetings are shown in Attachment C, and a list of participants is shown in Attachment D.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the September 12, 2002, teleconference were reviewed and approved as amended. The action items were reviewed and have been updated to their current status.

**EPA ROLES**

Ms. Hankins noted that this Board needs to consider in detail the roles and responsibilities that will be devolving from NELAC due to its restructuring, and which should be assumed by other organizations. In particular, this Board needs to recommend to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) its future role (and rationale) in NELAC. It was agreed that the Eighth NELAC Interim Meeting (NELAC 8i) will allow the Board to gather inputs from participants, however these issues go beyond the NELAC restructuring as reflected in discussions for modifying the NELAC Standard. Ms. Shields is initiating discussion material for E-mailing to Board members and for discussion at next month's meeting.

Ms. Labie reviewed:

- the memo from Ms. Dougherty, Director of USEPA/OGWDW to the Regions making the NELAC standards through July 2002 acceptable alternative guidance for lab certification (Attachment E), and
- the letter of support for NELAC from Dr. Hammerschmidt of the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) to EPA Administrator Whitman (Attachment F).

Following discussion, it was agreed that Ms. Labie would check with Ms. Sherry Clay, chair of the Membership and Outreach Committee, to see how they might use these endorsements in outreach.

**NELAC 10 MEETING LOCATION**

Mr. Wayne Davis, as chair-elect, reported that accommodations at the Charleston Place Hotel in Charleston, SC, <http://charlestonreservations.com/chasplace/> appear suitable for an annual meeting. Following discussion, it was agreed that he would continue negotiations for a meeting data of late August 2004.

## **NELAC 9 MEETING LOCATION**

Dr. Kimsey, as chair, reported that arrangements have been completed with the Hyatt Regency Islandia in San Diego, CA, <http://islandia.hyatt.com/>, for the Ninth NELAC Annual Meeting (NELAC 9), June 1-6, 2003. He noted that it is near many attractions, and that a handout for NELAC 8i is planned.

## **NELAC 8i MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

Ms. Barbara Giesler reported that plans are progressing for the NELAC 8i, November 17-21, 2002, meeting at the La Fonda Hotel, <http://www.lafondasantafe.com/>, in Santa Fe, NM,. She noted that hotel registrants are now in excess of 150, requiring use of the overflow plans.

## **NEED FOR INTERIM MEETINGS**

Ms. Hankins briefly raised the possibility that Interim Meetings may not be needed nor desirable under the developing restructuring of NELAC. She asked that Board members to E-mail their comments to her as soon as possible for discussion at the next meeting.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Dr. Kimsey then asked chairs to review 1) status of their committee members' membership in a standards development organizations (SDOs), and 2) issues expected at NELAC 8i.

### **Accreditation Process**

Ms. Susan Wyatt reported that she understands that several members have communicated directly with the Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA) <http://www.inela.org/>, and have joined. Anticipated discussion issues include NELAC accreditation status issues when a laboratory splits or merges. No changes to the chapter are being proposed at NELAC 8i.

### **Accrediting Authority**

Mr. Louis Johnson reported that half the committee has joined INELA, half are undecided. Anticipated discussion issues include: 1) currently specified timelines, 2) changes to the whistleblower wording, and 3) evaluator assessment arrangements.

### **Field Activities**

Dr. Simmons reported that most of the committee has joined INELA. Anticipated discussion issues include changes to the chapter, incorporating sections of chapter 5. He also noted that questions have been received about a "list of NELAC-approved SDOs"; following discussion, it was agreed that NELAC should not attempt this, but that a compilation of interested SDOs has been initiated. Mr. Edward Kantor will check on the status of this list for the next meeting.

### **On-site Assessment**

Mr. Alfredo Sotomayor reported that all of the committee members have joined INELA. Anticipated discussion issues includes three proposed glossary changes (these will be discussed

during the On-site Assessment session, rather than during the Program Policy and Structure session).

### **Proficiency Testing**

Ms. RaeAnn Haynes reported that most of the committee members intend to join INELA. Anticipated discussion issues for possible revision at NELAC 9 include: 1) Proficiency Testing Oversight Board (PTOB) oversight language and 2) fields of testing for additional samples.

### **Program Policy and Structure**

Dr. Ken Jackson reported that all the committee members have joined INELA, and plans are for coordinated presentations by each committee at NELAC 8i. Anticipated discussion issues include: 1) Constitution and Bylaws proposal, and 2) early draft of Chapter One for the conduct of conference business (to be distributed at the committee session). Glossary changes are to be discussed in the proposing committee sessions.

### **Quality Systems**

Mr. David Mendenhall reported that most committee members will join INELA. Anticipated discussion issues include: 1) revision to the performance based measurement system (PBMS) wording, 2) refinement to appendices, and 3) alignment with International Organization for Standardization (ISO) language.

### **Regulatory Coordination**

Mr. Kevin Coats noted that this committee need not be involved in SDO activities, since it is envisioned that the NELAC Board of Directors will assume these responsibilities. He also noted that he expects a brief committee session reviewing a survey that is in preparation and the annual regulatory survey.

### **Membership and Outreach**

Since the chair was not present for this call, there was no report

### **Nominating**

Ms. Silky Labie noted that this committee will remain with NELAC. The committee will have its first meeting next week; however, no issues are anticipated. The length of term of office for the next chair-elect under the reorganized NELAC will be discussed.

### **National Database (*ad hoc*)**

Mr. Caruso noted that this committee will remain with NELAC. With funding exhausted and the database still non-functional, alternatives are being explored. He noted that he expects Dr. James Stemmler of the U.S. EPA's Office of Environmental Information (OEI) to make the presentation.

### **Transition (*ad hoc*)**

Mr. Davis noted that this committee will remain with NELAC. The meeting of this committee will be held jointly with the Program Policy and Structure committee; there are no committee-specific issues anticipated.

**Small Organizations (*ad hoc*)**

Ms. Labie is organizing this committee prior to NELAC 8i. Issues are yet to be clarified.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next teleconference for the Board of Directors is scheduled for Thursday, November 14, 2002, at 1:30 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST).

**NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
DRAFT AGENDA  
October 10, 2002  
1:30 - 3:30 PM EDT**

- Approval of Minutes of September 12, 2002, Meeting \* - *Paul Kimsey*
- EPA Roles <sup>†</sup> - *Jeanne Hankins & Silky Labie*
- ECOS letter<sup>‡</sup>
- NELAC 10 - *Wayne Davis*
- NELAC 9 - *Paul*
- NELAC 8i - *Barbara Giesler*
- Need for Interim Meetings - *Jeanne*
- Committee Reports
- Old Business
- New Business

**NEW ACTION ITEMS  
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS/CHAIRS  
OCTOBER 10, 2002**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Ms. Shields will Email initial discussion material to Board members on new roles & responsibilities under the new organizational structure. For discussion at next meeting.	Due Nov 14
2	Ms. Labie will check with Sherry Clay on use of the OGWDW and ECOS endorsements.	ASAP
3	Board members should Email their comments on the need for Interim Meetings to Ms. Hankins as soon as possible for discussion at the next meeting.	Due Nov 14
4	Mr. Kantor will check on the status of a list of interested SDOS for discussion at the next meeting.	Due Nov 14

**ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS  
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OCTOBER 10, 2002**

<b>NO.</b>	<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
1	08/08/02	Dr. Kimsey will contact Mr. Sotomayor to inform him of the Board's decision to reinstate Mr. Dyer on the On-Site Assessment Committee.	Complete
2	08/08/02	Dr. Kimsey and Ms. Labie will form a Small Organizations <i>Ad Hoc</i> Committee (list of members).	Complete
3	08/08/02	Ms. Hankins will send revised NELAC policies to Board members.	10/10/02
4	08/08/02	Dr. Kimsey to contact NELAC Chairs regarding which standards development organization their committee will join.	In process
7	9/12/02	Mr. Davis will ask Dr. Kimsey to draft the invitation to Mr. Longest for him to make a presentation at NELAC 8i.	Complete
8	9/12/02	Ms. Hankins will recommend to the Regional Lead Evaluators that the observer use a cross walk along with the state's checklist.	In process
9	9/12/02	Ms. Hankins will invite the committee chairs to attend the October 10, 2002, teleconference.	Complete

Note: items that were noted as "Complete" in previous minutes have been deleted from this list.

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
OCTOBER 10, 2002**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Address</b>
Dr. Paul Kimsey Chair	CA Department of Health Services	T: (510)307-8419 F: (510)412-5848 E: pkimsey@dhs.ca.gov
Mr. R. Wayne Davis Chair-Elect	SC/DHEC Office of Environmental Lab Certification	T: (803)896-0972 F: (803)896-0850 E: davisrw@dhec.state.sc.us
Ms. Silky Labie Past-Chair	FL Dept. of Environmental Protection	T: (850)488-2796 F: (850)922-4614 E: silky.labie@dep.state.fl.us
Ms. Jeanne Hankins Director	USEPA/ORD	T: (919)541-1120 F: (919)541-4261 E: hankins.jeanne@epa.gov
Mr. Edward Kantor Executive Secretary	USEPA/ORD	T: (702)798-2690 F: (702)798-2261 E: kantor.edward@epa.gov
Ms. Ann Marie Allen	MA Dept. of Environmental Protection	T: (978)682-5237 F: (978)688-0352 E: ann.marie.allen@state.ma.us
Mr. Thomas Maloney	USGS National Water Quality Laboratory	T: (303)236-3460 F: (303)236-3499 E: tmaloney@usgs.gov
Mr. Richard Sheibley	PA Department of Environmental Protection	T: (717)705-2425 F: (717)783-1502 E: rsheibley@state.pa.us
Ms. Aurora Shields	KS Dept. of Health and Environment	T: (785)296-6198 F: (785)296-8068 E: ashields@kdhe.state.ks.us
Mr. Joe Slayton (Absent)	USEPA/Region 3	T: (410)305-2653 F: (410)305-3095 E: slayton.joe@epa.gov
Dr. Ken Jackson (Invited Guest)	NY Environmental Laboratory Approval Program	T: (518) 485-5570 F: (518) 485-5568 E: jackson@wadsworth.org
Mr. Gleason Wheatley	KY/Dept. of Environmental Services	T: (502)564-6120 F: (502)564-8930 E: gleason.wheatley@mail.state.ky.us
Dr. Gene Tatsch (Contractor Support)	RTI	T: 919-541-6930 F: 828-628-0659 E: cet@rti.org





UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460  
Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water  
Technical Support Center

OCT 1 2002

OFFICE OF  
WATER

**MEMORANDUM**

SUBJECT: Update on the Use of National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) Standards for Certification of Laboratories Analyzing Drinking Water Samples

FROM: Cynthia C. Dougherty, Director  
Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water

TO: Regional Drinking Water Representatives (Regions I-X)  
Regional Laboratory Certification Officers (Regions I-X)

It has been almost five years since my memorandum of October 20, 1997 supporting the use of NELAC standards and I would like to report to you on recent developments.

Following NELAC program implementation, the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water's (OGWDW's) Laboratory Certification Team conducted a review of 16 laboratory audits performed by eight of the NELAC Accrediting Authorities. The findings of this review were presented to the Accrediting Authorities during the "NELAC 8" meeting in Tampa, Florida on July 11, 2002. Significantly, the review verified equivalency to the criteria in OGWDW's "Manual for the Certification of Laboratories Analyzing Drinking Water," EPA 815-B-97-001, March 1997.

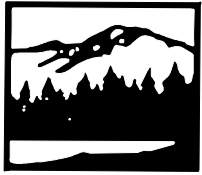
The NELAC standards, as amended through July 2002, may therefore be used as alternative guidance for use by States in the certification of laboratories under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). I continue to support the use of the NELAC standards in the certification of laboratories analyzing drinking water samples. Further, the use of NELAC standards fosters and increases the opportunity for national consistency. One of the Agency's primary goals in participating in NELAC is to encourage States to recognize certification of laboratories by other States, referred to as "reciprocity."

I would like to emphasize that NELAC is a voluntary program and that States may choose to continue to certify under the existing program based upon the criteria in OGWDW's aforementioned certification manual. Both options are acceptable in terms of maintaining primacy and producing data for compliance purposes.

I congratulate NELAC on their successful implementation of the standards and strongly encourage future reviews of the laboratory audits. Reviews conducted on a periodic basis, random in nature, and weighted toward larger programs, will allow continued assessment of equivalency and promote greater consistency within the program. I reiterate that the drinking water program will benefit nationwide through State participation in the accreditation program.

If you have questions concerning the drinking water laboratory certification program or its relationship to NELAC, please contact Caroline Madding at 513-569-7402.

cc: Nanci Gelb (4601M)  
Ephraim King (4607M)  
Gregory Carroll (Ci-TSC-140)  
Ed Glick (Ci-TSC-140)  
Patricia Hurr (Ci-TSC-140)  
Caroline Madding (Ci-TSC-140)



ECOS

September 25, 2002

THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
COUNCIL OF  
THE STATES

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PAST PRESIDENT

Administrator Christine Todd Whitman  
United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Whitman:

As leaders of state environmental agencies, we rely on environmental laboratory data in making decisions. It is essential for state and federal agencies, as well as the regulated community, policy makers, environmental or industry groups and public, to have consistently reliable, high quality data from environmental laboratories in order to make sound regulatory and, environmental management decisions. One of the important tools in achieving that goal is laboratory accreditation. To that end, the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) strongly supports the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP). The members of ECOS expressed their strong support for this program during our April 2002 meeting in Madison.

This letter reiterates our continued support.

Previously, there was considerable variation among state and federal programs with no national consensus standard. As a result, EPA formed a cooperative association with state and other federal agencies along with the private sector to establish and promote national performance standards for environmental laboratories. This association is known as the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC). With EPA's leadership and the active involvement of states and the private sector, NELAC has been an outstanding example of a successful state, federal, and private sector partnership.

Working together, the partners have accomplished the following:

- Twelve programs in eleven states have been approved by EPA's NELAP office as NELAC accrediting authorities.
- These programs have accredited 1248 labs in 45 states and three foreign countries.

Robert E. Roberts  
Executive Director

Administrator Christine Whitman

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- Other states have programs in development or officially recognize the NELAC standards.
- A survey showed that 40 states intend to pursue NELAP recognition from EPA or to accept NELAC standards
- The Methods Data, Comparability Board under the Advisory Committee on Water Information has recently endorsed NELAC accreditation for all federal and commercial labs performing routine analytical water testing as part of compliance or ambient monitoring programs.
- The Department of Defense has recognized NELAC standards for their laboratories and contractors.

Broad acceptance of this program in a short period of time demonstrates data quality is vitally important to environmental programs. We also recognize EPA provides a valuable service to the states through a leadership role in NELAC. However, continued EPA involvement and support is needed to keep NELAC moving forward at this critical time. Therefore, we urge EPA to:

- Maintain its current commitment to approve state lab accreditation programs;
- Become a model NELAP accrediting authority in order to accredit EPA and state laboratories;
- Acknowledge the need for NELAC standards across all EPA programs. (Although EPA has played a leadership role in NELAC, the safe drinking water program is the only one that has endorsed NELAC accreditation to date.);
- Provide sufficient level of EPA staff for NELAP activities, i.e., recognition of state accreditation programs and accreditation of state laboratories.

A significant reduction in EPA's present level of support and commitment could adversely affect states that have already implemented the NELAC standards as well as states that plan to do so. Reduction in support by EPA could put state laboratory accreditation programs in jeopardy and eventually degrade the quality data available to support environmental decision making.

Administrator Christine Whitman  
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EPA has requested that the states and private sector form a nonprofit organization to take over the standards development process and some of the administrative functions that EPA has been performing. This has been accomplished although it is not yet fully functional. We encourage EPA to continue support and participate fully during this critical phase of the transition of responsibilities. The importance of quality laboratory support and defensible results cannot be overstated.

I am looking forward to seeing you in San Antonio for the ECOS Annual Meeting. We appreciate your continued support and advocacy for states' environmental protection programs.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron', with a large, sweeping loop above the name.

Ronald F. Hammerschmidt, Ph.D.  
President, Environmental Council of States

RFH:cah  
CC: Linda Fisher, Deputy Administrator, EPA  
Sylvia Labie, Chair, NELAC Board of Directors